



Legislative Briefing

What Does the AG's Office Do?

On a monthly basis, the Office of the Attorney General is committed to bring to your attention important items that impact Utah. This newsletter will cover these three areas of the AG's activities:

1. Bringing Money to Utah
2. Legal Action Impacting Utah
3. Services Provided by the AG's Office

We hope that this communication tool will assist you in your work.

Bringing Money to Utah

HELP COMING FOR UTAH'S MORTGAGE FRAUD VICTIMS

The Attorney General's Office has negotiated to bring \$4.4 million to 2,100 Utah homeowners who were hurt by the unfair and deceptive practices of the mortgage lender Household Finance. They agreed to the pay restitution, legal costs and promised to abide by higher standards that will protect consumers in the future. Commercial Enforcement Division Chief Wayne Klein worked on the settlement for Utah.

SETTLEMENT BRINGS MONEY TO CONSUMERS AND MUSIC TO LIBRARIES

Utah consumers will pocket \$525,000 and Utah libraries and charities could receive 43,358 compact discs from a settlement with music distributors and retailers. Assistant Attorney General Wayne Klein worked on the antitrust lawsuit that claimed the defendants conspired to artificially inflate the price of music CDs. Consumers will be able to file a claim soon that will allow them to collect between 50 cents and \$1 for CDs purchased between 1995 and 2000.

CON MAN ORDERED TO PAY BACK VICTIMS

A businessman who conned subcontractors in Salt Lake and Utah counties has been ordered to pay \$28,812 in restitution. Richard Norris was also sentenced to 270 days in prison for creating an elaborate fraud involving nonexistent advertising, phony notices and fictitious companies. Assistant Attorney General Neal Gunnarson prosecuted this case.

Bringing Money to

GRILL MANUFACTURER WILL PAY TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE

A grill manufacturer will pay \$8.2 million to government agencies and charities to improve health care and nutrition. Salton Inc., the manufacturer of George Foreman's TM Mean Lean Fat Burning Machine, agreed to pay the money for allegedly fixing the price of the popular grills. Assistant Attorney General Wayne Klein worked with 43 other states and three territories to negotiate the settlement.

FRAUDULENT DEVELOPER AGREES TO PAY RESTITUTION

An Escalante man has agreed to pay \$509,000 to victims in Salt Lake, Iron and Washington counties. Frank Venuti admitted to pocketing investor's money that was supposed to be used to develop mountain recreation property. He will be sentenced this week after pleading guilty to three counts of securities fraud and one count of racketeering. Assistant Attorney General Neal Gunnarson represented

Legal Action Impacting Utah

NEW PUBLIC LANDS ATTORNEY

Assistant Attorney General Mark Ward has been assigned to handle public lands issues for Utah. The legislature created this position this year to protect the state's access to federal lands. Ward is working on a number of cases in U.S. District Court and before the Interior Board of Land Appeals—including the lawsuit over the amount of BLM land that should be designated as wilderness. Ward is also the staff attorney for the Constitutional Defense Council.

A.G. ASSISTS IN DEATH PENALTY CASE

Lewis and Michael Heffelfinger are charged with Capital murder for the killing of two local deer hunters in Daggett county. The case was bound over for trial after a preliminary hearing in September. A trial date has not yet been set. Kirk Torgensen and C.C. Horton from the Attorney General's Office are assisting the Daggett County Attorney with the prosecution of this case.

COUPLE FACING BIGAMY AND SEX ABUSE CHARGES

The Attorney General's Office has charged a 36-year-old Utah man with unlawful sexual conduct with a 16 or 17-year old and bigamy. The defendant's wife was also charged with aiding and abetting the unlawful sexual conduct and bigamy. Assistant Attorney General Kris Knowlton is prosecuting the case and Ron Barton handled the investigation. Barton was hired in 2000 after the legislature appropriated money to investigate inherently difficult cases involving sexual offenses and welfare fraud in closed communities.

WORK UNDERWAY TO DEFINE MENTAL RETARDATION IN CAPITAL CASES

The Attorney General's Office has been working with the Statewide Association of Prosecutors on a bill that would modify the criminal code and define mental retardation for death penalty cases. The clarification is needed after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling prohibited the execution of mentally retarded defendants. The Utah Sentencing Commission has issued a report, and the issue will be on the agenda today with the Judiciary Interim

Services Provided by the AG's Office

CYBERCRIMES

The Utah Cybercrime Task Force investigates crimes committed via computer systems, including internet fraud, computer intrusion, cyber stalking, and computer or Internet-related extortion. If you or your constituents are victims of a cybercrime, please contact the Attorney General's office at (800) AG 4 INFO or E-Mail the Cybercrime Task Force at cybercrime@utah.gov.

ID THEFT

Identity fraud occurs when someone uses personal information such as your name, social security number, or bank account number without your knowledge to commit fraud or theft. Unfortunately, this sort of crime is on the rise. If you or any of your constituents are victims of ID fraud, please contact the Attorney General's office at (800) AG 4 INFO or E-mail the ID Fraud Unit at IDFraudunit@utah.gov.

REALITY CHECK TOUR

The Attorney General will be visiting Utah schools during the next two months to provide information about the dangers of methamphetamine and club drug use. If you would like to partner with the Attorney General when he visits schools in your district, please call Ric Cantrell at (801) 538-1879. Here is the tentative schedule:
 October 24 Davis County, October 25 Summit County, October 28 Salt Lake County, October 29 Weber County, October 31 Utah County, November TBA Iron County, November TBA

The Attorney General's Office represents the State in thousands of cases each year. If you need information on any matter being handled by our office, please call Ryan Mecham at 538-1948 or Attorney General Mark Shurtleff at 538-1191. Thank you.